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PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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23448

NEW YORK:

JAMES D. TORREY, PRINTER, 13 SPRUCE STREET,

1860.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION.

PHYSICAL Education is a subject full of interest and vitality ; for, it exhumes all past statements relating to education, which are now historic ; it puts the axe *investigation*, glittering with its keen edge, *why*, to the root of present institutions, and recognizes, with firm conviction, that its teachings and decisions involve the well being of the present and of coming generations.

Based upon the observations of their respective phenomena, man is defined a three-in-one-being. This complexity was recognized, by the ancients, under two natures ; for Juvenal says, “ *mens sana in corpore sano*,” Cicero and Plato constantly make the same distinction.

His emotional nature is now recognized, as is shown by his attempted religious culture corresponding thereto. True education, then, we maintain, must consist in the correct development of the nascent powers of this three-in-one-being.

We are to deal with that part of this development, to-night, which pertains to his physique. But *this* being so intimately connected with his whole development, we can better approach it by first examining the present Educational system.

A sagacious mind has remarked that, “ with the feebleness of the mother begins the feebleness of the child.” A very recent author, and one of large practical experience, says, “ the sickly, feeble mother rarely has a robust and healthy child.” The mother of small mental abilities does not often bear an intellectual giant, nor does she who gives way to every impulse and passion, find in her offspring that gentleness and equability of temper in which she is deficient.

An author of high authority in England, gives, in strong language, his view on this point. “ There never lived a *great* man, in whatever department or pursuit of life, who had not a noble mother, of excellent physical, moral, and mental health. Search history, and prove the contrary, if you can.” So much for the woman, *per se*. When a woman finds she is about to become a mother, she should avoid all places where she would be likely

to meet with anything that would give a shock to her system, or that would leave a disagreeable impression upon her mind. Her diet should be nonriching, yet simple—not selected from spiced food, nor with an excess of stimulants, either solid or fluid.

The bowels should be moved once a day, constipation must not be allowed, and there need be no occasion for it, if attention be given to the proper use of fruits, vegetables, air, and exercise. The waist must be entirely free, in order that the lungs can have freedom in their play ; upon this and the alimentary substances depends the quality of the blood of the mother : and from her blood, anterior to birth, is the entire nourishment of her child derived. Her feet are to be kept free, dry, and warm.

The husband (we shall speak of him more fully hereafter,) here shows his manliest qualities in administering to the happiness of his wife by removing to its greatest extent every care, keeping her mind in a quiet, happy state, her body in a perfect condition, and, in the language of a world-wide renowned author, “by making this his duty, and reflecting that he thereby watches over the life and health of his offspring, deserves, in the fullest sense, the title of *father*.”

O woman ! “Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel, but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is, in the sight of God, of great price.”

And men, “Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts : and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.” And both strive to rise to the recognition of the lofty sphere appointed for you, qualify yourselves for the fulfilment of every duty, every privilege, and then fulfil them, and this beautiful, wonderful world will become to you even more beautiful, still more wonderful.

These are vital truths. Are they made a prominent consideration in the present Institution of Education ?

In due time a child comes into the world, possessed of a large cerebral development, also a large development in the region of the lungs, generally with perfectly formed though diminutive limbs, as compared with the parts just enumerated.

The great Architect sees to it that his work is not in vain, nor miscalculated. The new-comer is provided with a *trade*, and at the proper time would like to go to work at it—nay, will, or let you know that you do not quite understand your position in relation to him.

Those organs essentially requisite are most developed ; adhesiveness,

alimentiveness firmness, (using Phrenological terms for want of better,) are most conspicuous. The young being is true to their guidance. He sticks close to his home, close to his trade, and is firm in his demands. Time wears away ; by slow and almost imperceptible degrees he awakens to recognition, and in one year you will perceive that the intellectual faculties are increasing. The region of the moral faculties is for a long time not even covered with its bony dome.

The three following years are years of deep interest, and would well repay us for an hour's attention. We must pass them, merely observing the mutual harmony of development between the entire parts of the body and the brain. You talk "baby talk" to him, you show him many things, and in due time, after having graduated in his coos and ah-goos, he begins to collect names, delighted with the syllable ma, ere he can say mamma. He is four years old, has grown finely, has acquired the use of a language such as he will rarely gain of another, under the present modes of instruction in any two and a half of his succeeding years. In this process of his education thus far, the multitudinous phenomena of the external world have been awakening impressions in his mind through the media of the senses.

I am not unaware of the difficulties mental philosophy experiences in endeavoring to explain the connection existing between the mental and material world ; but it is enough for me now to know that the deaf ear dwells in silence amid an ocean of melody, and the blind eye sees not even in the midst of a paradise. I deny not that all the elements of sound may exist in the soul of the one, and all the elements of light in the soul of the other, because I do not know. But I do know we have no evidence of such existence here, until the respective organs are opened.

Through the media of the senses, then, thus far has he been educated. The impressions received causing him constantly to be investigating, and you are met at every turn by his questions, what is this ! what is it for ? and, what are you making that for ? It needs no very close observation to arrive at the fact, that at first a single name gives him the *tout ensemble* of an animal or a thing ; by degrees he acquires the names of their various parts, and in my opinion, at this very point, "begins the tempest of his soul." From the birds, the fish, the flowers, and the sunshine—in a word, from this natural process, in which there has been no flagging of interest, and which, by the very law of his being, has a tendency to extend to the minute, and then from the minute to rise to classification, then to generalization or abstraction he is taken away, and is confined from five to eight hours a day, for years, and coaxed, flattered, or driven to pour over the lettered book, hindering, to a very great extent, this natural course of education.

But we must look at results in order to form a correct estimate of the forces at work in any system. This child is broken off from the true line of his development, and the limits of this discourse will permit me to trace the results in but a few directions. First, then, he has not proceeded far enough in his experience to have *correct* ideas of anything. As shown before, his language extends only to the first of parts, not to the more distant and minute : to the leg of the animal, not the tendon and muscle ; to the eye, not to its different humors nor the difference of density in the same humor ; he has not the *basal* upon which to build during all his life. As a further illustration, and one nearer home, I will venture to say that not two boys from four to ten years of age, out of twenty, can draw a required line of one foot in length, on a blackboard, or elsewhere, within an inch of the standard. Now, this want of precision is the result of shutting off this natural education at so early a date, and in this state of vagueness he is sent to books, and six years, at least, may be put down as almost a dead loss, and I would it were nothing more ! His body is confined, constrained, and he is compelled to breathe air more or less vitiated ; he is tasked with lessons in and out of school ; he finds the difficulties, in the main, insurmountable, under the high pressure system of the fast age ; and at the last, is compelled, for the sake of retaining his standing in his class, to prevaricate ; he finds others doing the same ; and as soon as he can do so with a show of plausibility, runs off into one or two studies, which become in time his favorites ; and because of a superiority, either fancied or real, administer sufficiently to his own vanity, and the pride of his parents, and thus borne on by these depraved, because perverted, elements of his nature, is effectually shut out from the great volumes of nature and of letters, and narrows down into the routine of the cares and toils of life till, worn out, he is cast up, drift-wood, of what should have been a noble vessel, on the shore of time.

Second. Let us look at the development of his emotional nature for a few minutes. Who has not heard of, and who does not remember, the sunny hours of childhood—the time of the true democracy of the young heart ? He is ready to play with Willie or Charley, or little curly-haired black Frank ; he knows no difference ; Frank's shingle boat, with feather sails, behaves as well as Willie's, Charley's, or his own. At the close of the day, when he returns home, upon being asked, "Where have you been ?" and replying, is met by this reproof, "That was very wrong in you, you must never play with Frank again." Well do I remember circumstances precisely such ; and well do I remember when, in the integrity and simplicity of his nature, my companion put the question to his mother, *Why not ?* and as I then thought, with justice, though it must have been

more an instinct than a thought, as it is among the earliest of my remembrances ;—no answer was made—we were bidden to play in the yard.

He now and then gathers an expression from a group of men, or with wondering eyes, looks on their thousand manifold occupations. He asks for an explanation, is answered, “go to your grammar,” “get out of the way,” “don’t bother me,” “go to school.” Here we have it. The school has not yet the ability to say, by its attractiveness and completeness to meet his wants, “come to me.” Ever and anon, we see the hydra Power rearing one of its thousand heads, and at first *whispering* for a law—a bigger parent—to compel this child to go to school. Ere such a law shall find its way into the statute book, let it be met by the principle of our forefathers, “resistance to tyrants is obedience to God.”

More than this, things that he is willing to do, and concerning which, when he expresses that willingness, together with the conviction of his ability to do, are too frequently denied him, and he is turned off as before. Limited to a penknife, which is a kingdom to him, his kite, ball, and mimic boats, with no other water than that in the tub, or watering-trough, near the pump—driven back, headed off at every turn, cabined, restrained, compelled, he drags six or eight of the most precious years of his existence away in distorting his mind, enervating his body, souring and perverting his emotional nature, and then to his inflictions, he is often charged with being destructive, mischievous, if not absolutely wicked, a consequence of original sin, so predestinated from all eternity.

Now, the girls’ education is not so good as the boys, though in the main the process is the same, yet other restraints are imposed on her from which he is exempt. She must not play, run, and frolic, else she is a “tom-boy.” She must never have the sweet air of heaven fan her cheek, else she would be tanned, and no lady is tanned. It is very vulgar to have the body grow up as nature intended it should ; she must not be bold, and have strength, else she will lose the taperiness of her fingers, and would look like Margaret or Kate in the kitchen ; and thus you may go through the whole list, and after extracting all the honorable exceptions, you will find the residuum is the *modus operandi* of all christendom.

Is this very flattering to the vaunted institution, Education ?

But it does not end here. You have, by this very process, sown some of the worst seeds in the richest soil ; we shall see its fruits. By your evasions, by your incorrect answers, by your tremendous perversion of nature’s process, by your silence upon all important topics, by your refusals, by your compulsions, you have implanted in them a deep distrust, and as soon as he (it is true for both,) begins to find the solution of his questions, and solve them he will, he will show his insubordination ; and in the hour

when you would truly have him guided by your councils, he proves incredulous ; you have shaken his confidence, and he now knows that your hold on him, daily, grows weaker and weaker.

Am I met here by the assertion, that this would be dreadful, were it true ; it is drawn a little too much from imagination, hardly borne out by facts. To the facts then we go, and see the results of this mode of education. First, then, this want of precision shows itself in every department of literature. And I desire, at this point, to say, that the facts in my possession are so numerous that I could not cite them on any given subject upon which I have collected in less than three hours, therefore must be content with just enough to make myself, as I hope, clearly understood. I take a matter of statistics. The Patagonians are said, by Pegafitta, to be twelve feet in height. But under his followers—Schouten, Frézier, Byron, and Wallis—they shrink to eleven, ten, eight, and six feet ; and by the later measurements of Wallis, Bourgainville, Gerandais, Guyot, and Carterett, their average height is six feet five inches. Again, at a late meeting of the Royal Geographical Society (England), Dr. Rink, a Dane, read a paper, in which he called in question the accuracy of nearly all the discoveries of Dr. Kane on the north coast of Greenland. Dr. Rink maintained that the line of coast on the American side of Baffin's Bay, as laid down in Dr. Kane's maps as high as 81° of latitude, was fictitious, and founded on observations reported to have been made from points where it was impossible to have seen the land. A bold impeachment, and we wait to see how it will be met.

Not long since I read what purported to be a letter, to one of our city papers, from a correspondent beyond the ocean, in which was an allusion to Tennyson, the poet, and his noble, intellectual appearance was lauded thus, "from whose massive brow we should expect a 'Paradise Lost,' or a Jerusalem Delivered." But a few days after, by a correspondent as before, to another of our city papers, this same Tennyson is represented as having a receding brow, thick lips, strongly marked with all the characteristics of the African race. So, of course, among the rest, he must be black !

Again—but a very few days since I read what a Washington correspondent, when writing to a Southern journal, said concerning the Hon. Wm. H. Seward ; among other preposterous things, is the following, "the balance pole by which he preserves his equipoise, is that cool big head, that bulks out above his narrow shoulders." Now it happens that I have the exact dimensions of the Hon. Wm. H. Seward, and can inform you that his head is twenty-two inches in circumference—not a big head—and the circumference of his chest is thirty-five and a quarter inches, which is a long way from narrow shoulders. In a very recent issue of quite an influential

journal, the English papers are gravely charged as being altogether unreliable concerning their affairs at Lucknow ; so much so that the journal in question has altogether refused to cite from them.

In a work on Physiology—one extensively used as a text-book, and, on the whole, written with singular neatness and precision—we find such expressions as these : “ The mountains, the rocks, and even the stones under our feet, remain the same, year after year ; while all vegetable and animal life is ever changing its forms and manifestations.”

It is hardly necessary to direct your attention to the brown-stone fronts, or the marble steps, of some of the mansions, or the granitic flaggings of your streets, to show the incorrectness of this teaching.

The idea is repeated several times in the work, and I am sorry to be obliged to say that many of the text-books in use, and over which children and youth, shut out from the sweet air and bright light of heaven, are compelled to drag heavily away their days, are no better than these quoted.

Again, the following, among the injurious effects now manifest in the female portion of the community, can be clearly traced to the present mode of education. By refusing all those conditions, presented in the boys' case, and teaching the girl that it is not lady-like to enjoy these noble out-door and in-door muscular exercises, her body is greatly enfeebled, she really has not the power to perform those varied duties so requisite to her own as well as others' happiness, the direct consequence is, she is thought to be delicate, she is sympathized with, is seized with ennui, a doctor is called, (there are honorable men in the profession,) and she is fairly started on the broad road of misery.

In the train of evils she is surrounded by waiting maids ; if she can't have five or six, she has one, should it prove to be none other than her time-worn mother ; thus, fostered in her indolence, when called upon to take charge of her own household, she is by necessity compelled to carry out her education ; the consequence is, a retinue of ignorant, slovenly, dirty, wasteful menials is fastened as necessary appendages to her household, and her children, should she ever be favored with any such blessing, are likewise committed to their care. *Her* mind diverted from its true channel cannot, and does not have any interest in the solid questions and realities of life, and for them substitutes the superficialities—hence, extravagance in dress, in furniture, in living through the whole cycle of gewgaws, from a \$1000 piano down to a poodle, all this because she is a lady, and *must* live in style.

The husband to meet this state of things must expand his business, hence *his* retinue of clerks, etc., hence the fundamental principle in trade—buy for the least, sell for the most—sanctioned, praised under the name

of *shrewdness*, and for which by his previous life-long training he is peculiarly fitted, and early leads him from driving a sharp bargain to a bank defalcation, or a wholesale State swindle.

He toils from early to late in his little back dusky office, to support his hindermate, and those devoted mumbling and genn-flexed Catholics in the up-town palace. And does not the Catholic Church, the foe of humanity and brake on the wheel of progress, through all *her* grades of priesthood, smack her lips with very joy at the sight of the monstrous machinery that grinds out the "heretic," while it drops his coins into her coffers?

More than this, the intellectual intensity, necessary to carry on such a system, shows its effects in the haggard countenances, the crooked, distorted, emaciated frame-work of their bodies, and the almost universal loss of the hair and teeth. Life, already at a white heat, is accelerated by the deadly stimulants to which it betakes itself for temporary relief, till the tinsel palaces and public halls are saturated with their fumes and the air of heaven is scarcely able to bear away the noisome vapors that roll up from the restaurants and drinking dens, and you slide through your streets on the narcotic slime of your filthy habits into a prison, a lunatic asylum, or a premature grave.

Am I met again by the assertion that this is too strong? Then account to me on some other hypothesis, for the existence of five thousand physicians (omitting the quacks,) the twenty thousand rum shops (omitting those which sell in defiance of law,) for the fifty thousand prostitutes that are found in every part of your city, for the constantly increasing number of prisons crowded with culprits, for the rapid increase and extension of "homes" for all sorts and conditions—for the increase of asylums for blind, deaf and dumb, and especially for lunacy? And, more than all these, the deep, pervading conviction of the general corruption of the country at large. But let us see if this is so considered by eminent men.

The Rev. Dr. Hawkes had occasion to say: "The education of this country is, I fear, addressed too exclusively to the *head*, we have not begun yet to make it a part of the business to educate the *heart*."

The Rev. A. D. Mayo recently wrote—"Every competent observer must confess that our system of public education is yet in a rudimentary condition. It does not yet shape a public intellect capable of dealing with the problems of our public life. It still leads the young through the mechanical routine of acquiring words empty of ideas, knowledge which takes no vital hold on the character. It conveys a medium of information to the threshold of the mind, but does not go in and awaken the original faculty and send it forth to conquer realms of thought and life. It gives the state citizens who cannot use books, walk blindly amid the

wonders of the physical world, deal with social affairs with no living comprehension of men, declaim and vote on vast schemes of state and national policy with humiliating want of comprehension. The school does not yet prepare the children to fill honorably and efficiently the exalted post of citizenship of the Empire State."

Kirwan, known throughout the country as the unanswered antagonist of Bishop Hughes, says, "Many of our ablest physicians trace the insanity which is filling our asylums to the neglect of the physical training of children, and to the foolish, if not sinful, anxiety of parents for their rapid education."

The Rev. George B. Cheever, in his late remarkable speech, while describing the general corruption of the country, attributes it to slavery, or, rather, to the principle which upholds slavery. With all due respect to Dr. Cheever, we think, that while he claims the general corruption of the community as a result of slavery, we can claim slavery as a result of our perverted system of education. Speaking of the policy of slavery, as established, the doctor says, "This dictum is fast being welded into chains, into political precedents, sealed and made sure, and snare after snare in the iron net is *woven on by* lies, by perversions of the constitution and of history. Our judges, cabinet ministers, attorneys (general and local,) and secretaries of state, are hunting up examples of old injustice for precedents of new villany. They thus set *immorality and cruelty in the fountains of justice*, infecting all its elements with death." Again, "We talk of the world's conversion, and here, in these anniversaries we drive all the *multi-fold machinery* of the societies we have set in motion, *while every day* our very power to manage them and to keep them from the villany of our own example grows less, and we go boasting of our health, and strength, and prosperity, with this terrific disease, under which we may be staggering, as a drunken man, upon the very last verge of God's endurance."

These are some of the *opinions* of the well-known writers and speakers of our country and day, and similar views can be quoted from leading men in almost every state of the Union. But let us go to the living page, and take an impartial survey of all the leading papers of our country, from the prison statistics and the court calendars, and I see not (in the language of a candid observer) how we can escape one of two conclusions—either there is something exceedingly faulty about our plans of popular education, or else that the hopes which we have entertained of the beneficial influence of education on society, are fallacious; for it is certain that in no part of the United States has it had the effect contemplated as necessary by the theory of our government. A great deal has been done of late years to advance the cause of public instruction, and we grant that advances have been

made in intellectual activities, but what has it accomplished for the interests of public virtue? "What are the condition and prospect of American morals? Is all well? Are there not many who believe that, in despite of colleges, academies and common schools, we are rapidly degenerating? that our situation is at present well nigh desperate? and is there not abundant cause for apprehension that what is already bad, is fast becoming worse?"

Is the spirit of legislation more honest and disinterested than it was in the earlier days of the Republic? Is patriotism gaining the ascendancy over avarice and ambition? Can we bring the savage to attest that we are more virtuous than our immediate forefathers? Are we getting to attach a greater degree of sanctity to the sabbath and to oaths than formerly? Is the sacred character of juror more respected, or more worthily and consistently maintained? Are the ends of justice less interrupted by favoritism, money, party feeling, or other sinister considerations, and more easily and effectually attained than during our early history, when public education was scarcely talked of? Has the law become so prompt and faithful in vindicating injured reputation, that it is no longer deemed disreputable to resort to it for protection and redress?

Is the thirst for luxurious indulgence on the wane? Has the lust for instantaneous wealth, the desire of fortune without the use of means; in short, the gambling propensity, been growing weaker? Is party feeling becoming shorn of its acerbity, its selfishness, its recklessness? Has the spirit of insubordination, of disrespect of law, and a disposition for personal revenge been on the decrease? What is the language of our newspapers on this subject? Do they say that duels, murders, riots, robberies, assassinations, mobs, and such like are becoming rarities? What is the voice of our legislative records? Have our legislators been engaged of late in abridging the extent and mitigating the severity of the criminal code? Why this common movement in one part of our country to suppress the barbarous practice of carrying concealed weapons, and whence the general effort to protect the lives of citizens from fashionable manslaughter? What say the dockets of our courts, and the number and condition of our almshouses, jails and penitentiaries?"

Perhaps we have been permitted to degenerate, until the modern sciences should have so far perfected themselves as to give a solid basis whereon to rear this noble structure, and it may require yet deeper degradation, before the public sense will be awakened.

View the subject as we may, the picture is anything but agreeable, the prospect anything but pleasing; and yet there never was a time when half the attempt was made to diffuse the means of education. How is

this to be accounted for? Here is a new question for the advocate of social improvement. It is easily answered, however. There is not the slightest room to doubt that it is owing, not to the want of efficiency in education so called, but to almost universal *mis*-education.

But, *dark* as is the picture, I have perfect confidence in the ultimate triumph of truth. I believe history shows it.

If, now, we have been successful in portraying to you the conditions that should surround the child in his beginnings, the order in which nature would have him developed, the perverted system now universally practised, and have traced the effects that are produced upon him by this perversion, both in the outer and inner life, and the condition of society that is the natural result from these antecedent causes, we have a startling disclosure of the principles and mighty enginery that work without slumbering, for undermining the social fabric, and are now prepared to consider the question—what is physical education, and what has it to do with the principles now in action?

The first and most obvious work it has to perform is, to renovate and heal, so far as may be, the wounded and dying that are scattered up and down the road of life. To take the hundreds upon hundreds of children, from "youth to hoary age," that are now pale, emaciated, crookbacked and crookkneed, sick in body and in mind, eaten up with dyspepsia and ennui, surrounded by and loaded down with bad propensities and habits, and restore them to a normal condition, to remove them from their vague, indeterminate, excited state, to one that is real, positive and self-possessed. How is this to be done? In no other way than by the system of true gymnastics. In order to introduce them to you in a correct manner, and at the same time indicate the fundamental principles upon which the system is based, we state them as enumerated by the great Swede, Ling.

1. Every just attempt to develop the powers of the human being, in either of his three natures, is an education.

2. Every movement is dependent on the organization of the human being; whatever transgresses the laws of that organism is irrational.

3. The sphere of the activity of the muscles and the laws of gravitation determine the limits of a movement of the body,

4. Every movement, however simple and light it may appear to be, results from the nature of the organism, and such part of the body, within the limits of its own function and especial office, ought to participate in that movement.

5. To arrive at a normal development of the body, it is necessary to begin by ascending to the primitive type of each movement; this study should be *exact*, and can never be considered trifling or unimportant by any one who knows that every movement is either simple or composite.

6. In physical order, as in moral order, simple things are the most difficult to apprehend ; thence' one cannot too deeply study simple movements.

7. A movement is nothing worth if it is not *correct*, that is, if it is not in conformity with the laws of the organism.

8. The body, whose different parts are not in harmony, is not in harmonious accord with the mind.

9. The aim of gymnastics is the proper development of the human organism, by means of correct movements.

10. *Correct movements* are such as are founded on the character and temperament of the individual to be developed thereby.

11. The organism can only be said to be perfectly developed, when its several parts are in mutual harmony, corresponding to different individual predispositions.

12. The development of the human body must be contained within the limits of the creative faculties, moral, mental or physical, with which each individual is endowed.

13. Such a faculty may be blunted by want of exercise, but can never be utterly annihilated.

14. An incorrect or misapplied movement may prevent the development of such a faculty, consequently, an incorrect movement tends rather to the disadvantage than to the gain of the harmonious development of the body.

15. All one-sided development impedes the practice of corporal exercises ; general and harmonious development, on the contrary, facilitates them.

16. Stiffness or immobility in any part of the organism is, in most instances, only an over development, which is always attended by a corresponding weakness in other parts.

17. The over-development of one part may be diminished, and the weakness of other parts remedied, by equally distributed movements.

18. It is not the greater or smaller size of any part which determines the strength or weakness of an individual, but the proportion and the harmony of the several parts. Congenital and accidental disorders do not come within this category.

19. A real and increased power consists in a simultaneous concentration in the action of the several parts (action and reaction.) In order that motion and power may be developed to their highest point, they must be simultaneous in all parts.

20. Perfect health and physical power, consequently, are correlative ; both are dependent upon the harmony of the several parts.

21. In corporal development, commencing with the simplest, you may

gradually advance to the most complicated and powerful movements ; and this without danger, inasmuch as the pupil has acquired a knowledge of what he is capable or not capable.

We are thus introduced to principles of the most profound and far-reaching philosophic system that the world has yet seen. By a careful study of these principles, a mind conversant with history, the various philosophic systems that have been and those now acting, and a good acquaintance with microscopic anatomy, which will naturally lead to special and comparative physiology, *will discover* that all vital phenomena are arranged under three fundamental orders : 1st, *Dynamical phenomena*, embracing the manifestations of the moral and intellectual powers ; 2d, *Chemical phenomena*, under which we find assimilation, sanguification, secretion and nutrition ; 3d, *Mechanical phenomena*, both voluntary and organic ; including respiration, mastication, deglutition and circulation.

The union and harmony of these three orders of phenomena characterize a perfect organization, and every vital act is accomplished under their combined influence.

The different share these phenomena take in a certain vital act, gives it its peculiar character. If any serious derangement occurs in any of these phenomena, the result is always a disturbance of the vital functions,—this is called *disease*.

The state of health depends, accordingly, on the equilibrium and harmony that ought to exist between the functions of those tissues or organs in which these three orders of harmony occur.

When this harmony is deranged, in order to reestablish it, we should endeavor to increase the vital activity of those organs whose functions have a relation to that order of phenomena whose manifestation is decreased or weakened.

From *this stand point* it would be a simple axiomatic problem to show the anarchy which now prevails in the theories and practices of the various medical schools, and, to a great extent, that, also, prevailing in the different theologic sects. Now, as we survey all the various departments of our educational system, our colleges, academies, private and public schools, how many do we find competent to impart instruction on this all-important subject ? How many are there who do not violate, daily, every one of these fundamental principles, not only in their pupils but in themselves, and this, too, right in the face of the practical (though blind) admission to these truths, by men, in respect to the lower orders of animals. What says a singularly acute and brilliant writer on this point ? “ It is not uninteresting to remark, that in the case of the lower orders of animals, the necessity of modifying the method of cultivation according to the pecu-

liarities of constitution which they present, has been long perceived, (in its effects, not in its philosophy,) and consistently acted on, and with such success as to afford us good reason for applying the same rule to our own species. Yet, notwithstanding the *direct uses* to which a knowledge of the conditions which regulate the healthy action of the bodily organs may be applied, in the prevention, detection and treatment of disease, there is scarcely a school in this country in which any special provision is made for teaching it ; the pupil being left to elaborate it for himself, from amid information communicated to him for other purposes."

A great change is being wrought in the mind of the community on this subject. The increasing ailments of young children, the increase of all the evils before brought forward, the large per centage of young children affected with, or showing the symptoms of curvature of spine ; the years spent in the school house and the really little accomplished, and the want of practicability to the every-day affairs of life, in the little that is accomplished, all this has at last awakened the mind, and a voice from nearly every State in the Union calls for investigation and reform.

Several teachers in this city are giving their attention to this subject, and, by their influence, have placed some three hundred children in the gymnasium, and have also introduced such of the movements as they can into their own schools, and already have the satisfaction of seeing the good results, both in themselves and in their pupils.

Now, it cannot be too strongly urged upon your consideration not to lose sight of these fundamental principles ; remember it requires a skill and knowledge not yet disseminated for performing this work. A person may be able to perform a large number of gymnastic feats and yet be no gymnast, and might, in one half hour do a permanent injury to your child.

When Cod-liver oil is in the ascendant, a hog's-lard compound sells as well as the genuine. To show you some of the changes wrought, several years ago, when we were putting up the Metropolitan, a man engaged in teaching, said, "It will do very well for the Sixth Avenue,—now, we see the prominent schools advertise conspicuously in the newspapers and in their catalogues, their gymnasia—things that bear about the same proportion to a gymnasium that a fisherman's skiff does to a clipper ship. Gentlemen, we are pleased to see you moving in the right direction, be it ever so small, but don't 'steal the livery of heaven to serve the devil in.'"

Several physicians who have held aloof, and have spoken disparagingly of gymnastics, are very quietly slipping, now and then, a piece of apparatus into their front or back basement, and are now treating disease by movement-cure. Success to you, but we shall keep an eye on you. Yearly have we sent our prominent clergymen catalogues ; never until within the

past year or so, till borne down by the immense wave of public opinion, have they ventured in, but now scarcely a week passes without finding a circular of some two-penny concern, under the direction of the Rev. Mr. Blank.

I glory in being a teacher ; in having passed eighteen years of my life in its trials and its joys. Truly there is a duality in life, and the law of compensation follows all. The bright eyes that ever and anon beam upon me, the letters telling of happiness and prosperity, or regretting errors and deficiencies, the earnest grasp of the hand after long separations—these, and a thousand untold associations bind me to the profession—a profession second to none,—one admitted on all hands that requires a peculiar combination of gifts (both natural and acquired,) a liberal acquaintance with the whole range of science, art and literature, with a thorough mastery of his own speciality, a full and free command of language, rich and apt in illustration, enthusiastic and a practical philanthropist, regarding the welfare of every pupil with an enlightened conscientious solicitude, laboring the same whether requited or not, praised or blamed, ever remembering he is accountable to the Father of us all,—a deep, clear insight into human nature, knowing how to touch the keys of the young heart till the school-room is filled with the melody of loving souls, the harmony of awakened intellects, a model in character and habits, by a seemingly imperceptible yet direct influence imbuing his pupils with the principles of justice, patriotism and personal responsibility.

When boards of education, and school committees, and district trustees more fully understand the nature and responsibility of the teacher, they will vote less money for good-for-nothing buildings, and seek out and employ, even at adequate salaries, *the element* that makes *your* school. Much more remains to be said, relating to the modus of gymnastics to the appointing of teachers, the qualifications of those now employed—the text books, the modes of instruction, and the defective construction of some of the most costly buildings in the city.

“ All rests with those who read.

A work or thought

Is what each makes it to himself, and may

Be full of great dark meanings, like the sea,

With shoals of life rushing ; or like the air,

Benighted with the wing of the wild dove,

Sweeping miles broad o'er the far western woods,

With mighty glimpses of the central light,—

Or may be nothing—bodiless, spiritless.”

